

MAY 24, 2016

MOTION BY CHAIR HILDA L. SOLIS AND SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL

EXAMINATION OF THE ECONOMIC COSTS OF CHILD HOMELESSNESS

The economic cost of homeless adults has been well documented in Los Angeles by multiple studies, including in the most recent Los Angeles County (the County) Homeless Initiative report. However, there has not been any extensive research outlining the County costs that are incurred from the number of homeless children living on the streets and in homeless shelters.

Overall, the number of CalWORKs families has increased by 5% since 2006, while the number of Homeless CalWORKs families has tripled to over 16,000 during that same period. The Economic Roundtable report titled *Antecedents of Chronic Homelessness* found that 49% of all homeless public assistance recipients in the County are children.

Moreover, according to various studies there are strong correlations between homelessness, foster care and incarceration rates. In fact, 62% of children placed in foster care were formerly homeless. And, according to State Attorney General Kamala Harris, 80% of prison inmates in California were once involved in the foster care system.

It is generally acknowledged that the cost of foster care is over \$50,000 per child per year and the cost of prison is over \$70,000 per person per year. Robust research from

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the State of Virginia concludes that the public cost of not housing homeless families with children is over \$50,000 per year per family. Meanwhile, both Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and County's Community Development Commission report that the onetime cost of using Rapid Re-Housing to permanently house homeless families with children is less than \$12,000.

The County has embarked on numerous efforts to reduce homelessness among children including the development of the Homeless Families Solutions System, the Frist 5 Permanent Supportive Housing program, the Families Coming Home pilot, and the youth coordinated entry system pilot. More than 1,500 homeless families were aided by these efforts.

The County's efforts to solve homelessness could be greatly aided by more robust data documenting the true economic cost of child homelessness.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE, THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS direct the CEO's office to work with the Department of Public Social Services, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Health Agency, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Sheriff's and Probation Departments to examine the economic costs of homeless children in the County and develop a plan within 60 days that focuses on providing resources on an ongoing basis to house homeless children in the County..

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HLS: ss/jyp